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OKLAHOMA LABOR MARKET

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1986

OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION
OKLAHOMA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
WILL ROGERS MEMORIAL OFFICE BUILDING
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73105

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION

Total employment in Oklahoma, based on the place-of-residence series, reached 1,475,800 in May, up 7,000 from the previous month. A significant seasonal rise brought unemployment up to 138,700 from 129,200 and resulted in an 8.6 percent rate of joblessness compared to 8.1 percent in April. Year-ago comparisons showed a minor decline of 1,900 workers, while there were 29,200 more persons without employment. This caused a big jump in the unemployment rate from 6.9 to 8.6 percent. This over-the-year increase is attributed to the ongoing decline in oil and gas extraction and related layoffs in other goods-producing industries. Agriculture improved 4,600 seasonally in May, while domestic service, self-employed, and unpaid family workers remained stable.

Nationally, employment stood at 109,041,000 in May and unemployment 8,158,000 for a jobless rate of 7.0 percent, unchanged from both April of this year and May of 1985.

WAGE AND SALARY JOBS REMAIN SLUGGISH

The number of wage and salary workers totaled 1,162,200 in May, up only 1,000 from April's revised estimate. Five of eight major industries showed job increases, while three were down over the month. Wholesale-retail trade led all gainers with a 2,500 increase, mostly in the retail sector. Services managed to improve by a net 1,000, even after a seasonal setback of 1,200 in educational services. Construction added 900 to state payrolls, while transportation-public utilities gained 500 jobs. Finally, on the upside, finance-insurance-real estate posted a job level 200 higher in May than April. Mining continued to slide downward, losing 2,700 jobs. Manufacturing lost 1,100 as both durable and nondurables worker levels moved lower. Government employment slipped 300 as job increases of 1,000 at the federal level did not offset 1,300 reductions at state and local levels.

Year-ago comparisons showed 28,800 fewer wage and salary jobs this May than the corresponding 1985 month. This over-the-year loss resulted primarily from job declines in the three "goods-producing" industries; mining down 14,600, manufacturing off by 11,000, and constructions 3,600 drop. Oil and gas extraction bore the brunt of employment loss in the mining industry, while durables goods workers absorbed most of the decline in manufacturing. Among the five "service-producing" industries, three recorded gains and two were down. The so called "new collar" workers increased most in the service industry where 3,100 new jobs were created. Also on the plus side was wholesale-retail trade, up 200, followed by a 100 gain in finance-insurance-real estate. Government contracted by 2,500 over-the-year as state and local employment dropped and federal expanded. Transportation-public utilities' employment level dipped by 500, led by the 6.6 percent decline in trucking and warehousing.